

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

June 25, 2003

**The Honorable George W. Bush
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500**

Dear Mr. President:

As strong supporters of national service programs and proponents of a timely reauthorization, we are writing to urge you to reaffirm your commitment to national service, and to help solve the immediate funding crisis confronting AmeriCorps.

Since issuing a community service challenge to the nation in your 2002 State of the Union address, thousands of Americans have responded by seeking new opportunities to serve their communities and their nation. Your 2004 budget request addressed this surge of volunteerism by proposing to increase the number of AmeriCorps volunteers from 50,000 to 75,000. Many of us worked closely in the 107th Congress with House Education and Workforce Chairman Boehner to report a bipartisan bill to expand, enhance, reform, and reauthorize national service programs.

Regrettably, serious errors by the Corporation for National Service and Community Service will result in dramatic reductions in AmeriCorps, underscoring the need to reauthorize AmeriCorps and other service programs and increase accountability. In the short term, however, the survival of valuable programs in communities throughout the nation is dependent upon supplemental funding for AmeriCorps.

The Corporation has already informed Governors that they will experience program and AmeriCorps member cuts of 50 to 90 percent: only 53 grant applications out of 466 submitted were awarded. Nationwide, these reductions will be crushing at a time when state and local government is reeling from a nagging economy. For example, in Tennessee, 250 members currently serve. The Corporation cut the state's AmeriCorps slots by 76%, only awarding the state 60 positions. In Nebraska, AmeriCorps would lose 92 percent of its funding, dropping the number of volunteers in the state from 648 this year to perhaps just 10. Small states like Maine, New Hampshire, and West Virginia will also be able to fund only 10 AmeriCorps members; last year many of these states funded approximately 10 times that many. South Carolina officials were notified this week that 231 of the state's 267 AmeriCorps positions would not be filled during the coming school year. And, New York will go from 3000 volunteers to 149.

We understand that you plan to request another supplemental appropriations bill in the near future.

We urge you to include AmeriCorps funding in this request so as to stabilize these community based programs while we work on necessary reforms in reauthorization later this year. A minimum of \$200 million in funding is needed to sustain the 2002 level of volunteers -- a move that would delay consideration of your proposed expansion for the reauthorization process.

Without a supplemental appropriation, this dramatic decrease in AmeriCorps positions will be devastating to communities and the people who rely on their help. It is also likely to damage, if not destroy, the infrastructure of programs, which do not have the resources to sustain a significant budget cut, even if only for one year. Already, thousands of prospective members have put their plans on hold to accommodate the five-month freeze on enrollments instituted by the Corporation. Further delays will undermine our mutual commitment to promoting new service opportunities and empowering community-based organizations.

We support efforts to resolve the accounting problems that have plagued the Corporation and we want to work with you to correct the Corporation's management of the National Service Trust. Indeed, well-crafted bipartisan accountability provisions were included in the reauthorization measure reported by Education and the Workforce, as was a "capacity building" measure to promote new service opportunities in rural and urban communities. But in working to fix the Trust and other issues, we should be careful not to punish thousands of well meaning Americans who seek to serve their country and communities for mistakes made by Corporation executives.

We urge you to request additional funding in the supplemental appropriations bill to ensure that AmeriCorps remains a strong and vital program today and in the future. We look forward to working together to allow more Americans to serve their communities and the nation.

Sincerely,



HAROLD FORD
Member of Congress



TOM OSBORNE
Member of Congress

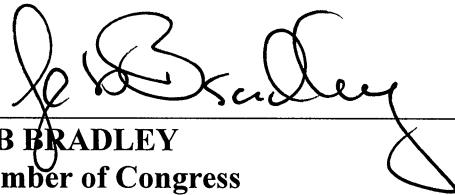
President Bush

6/25/03



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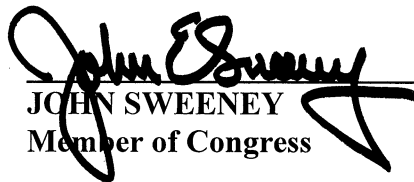
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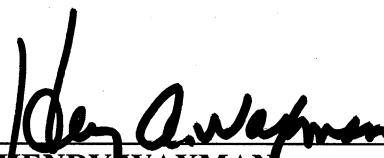
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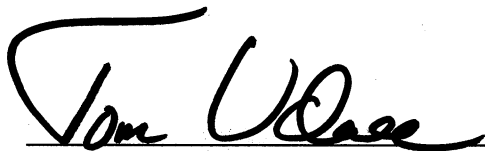
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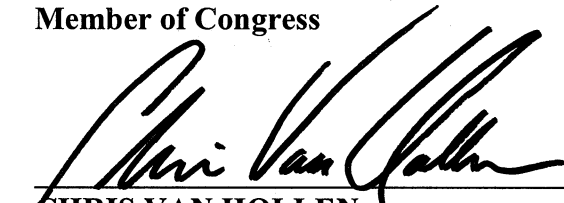
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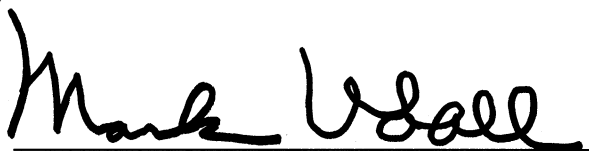
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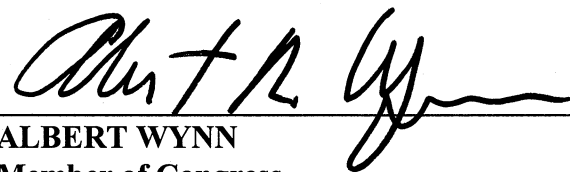
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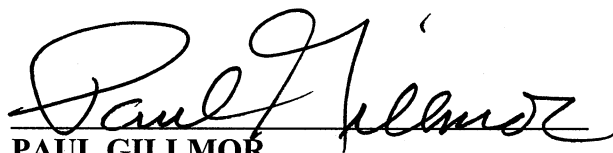

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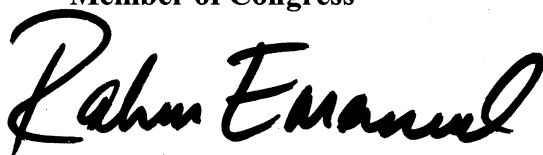
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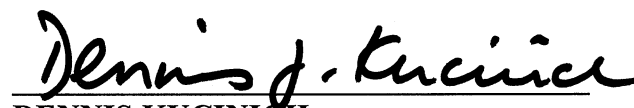
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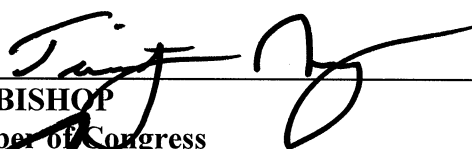
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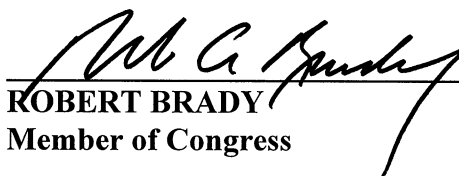
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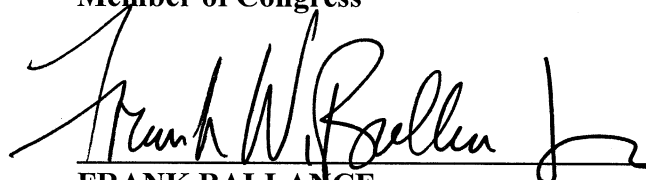
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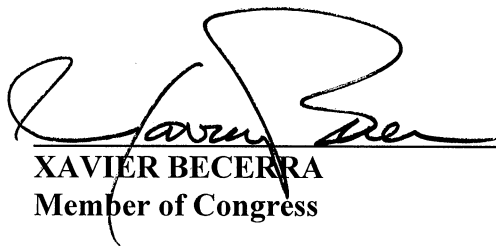
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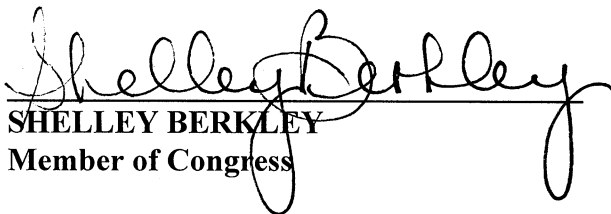
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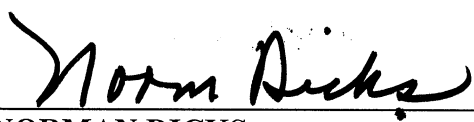

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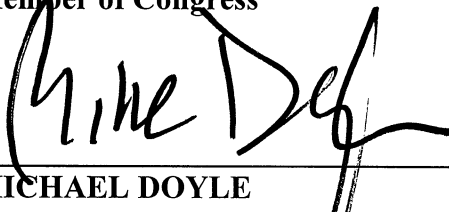

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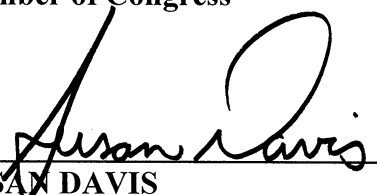

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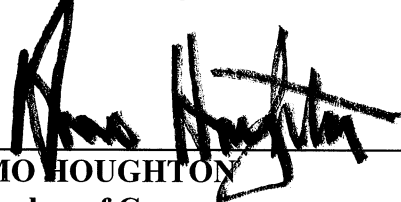
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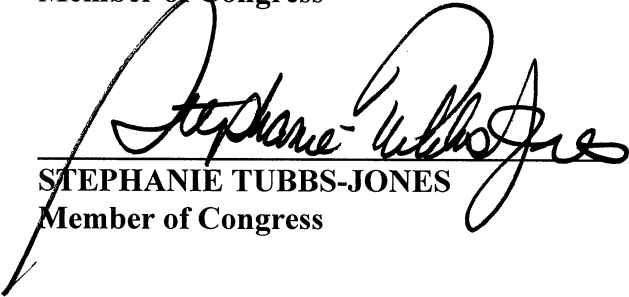
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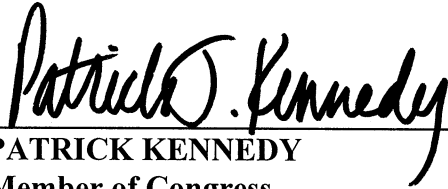
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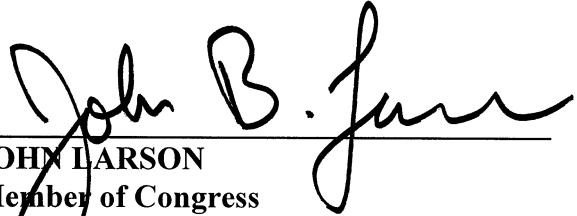
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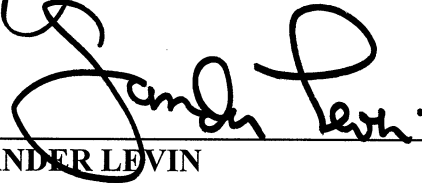
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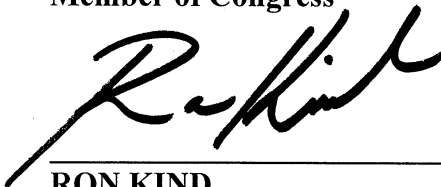
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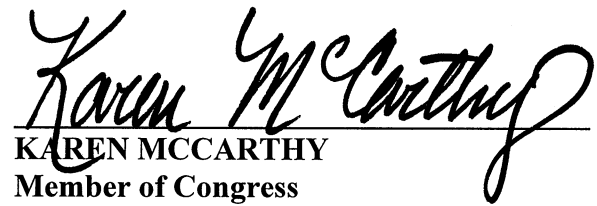


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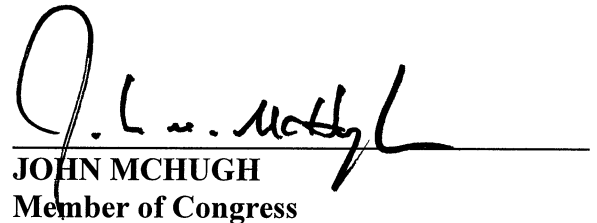

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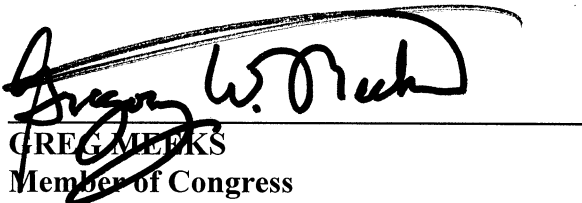

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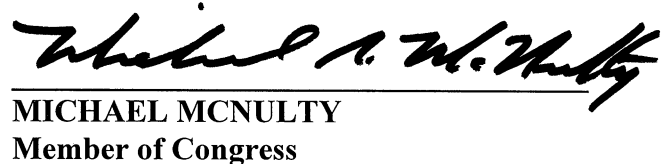

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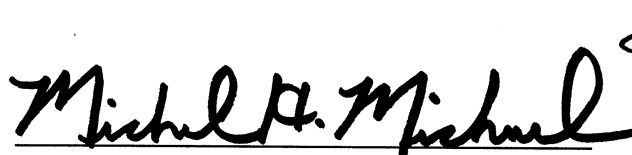

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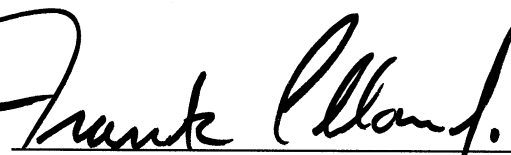

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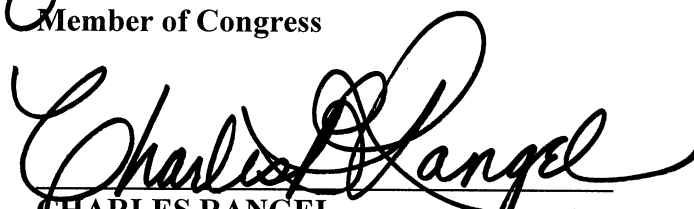

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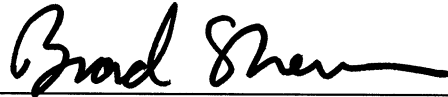

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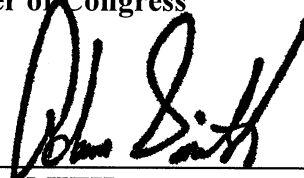
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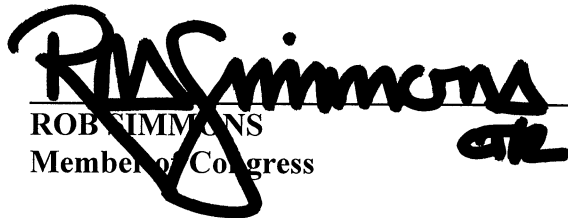
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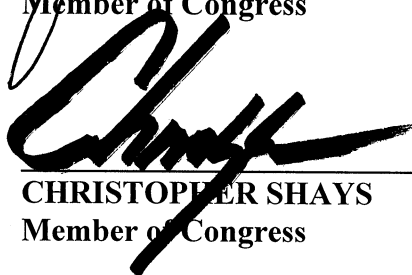
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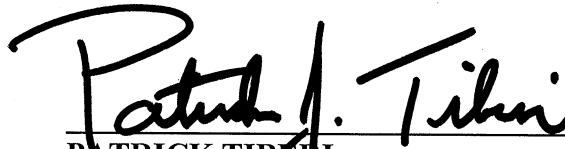
JOSE SERRANO
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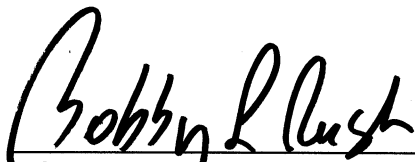
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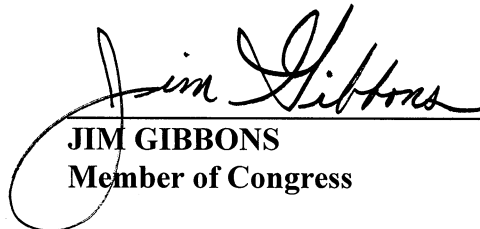
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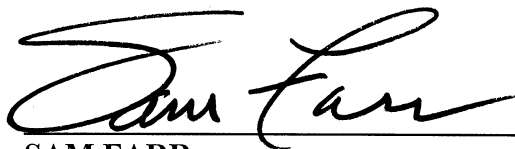
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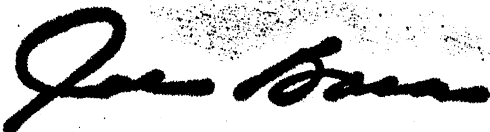
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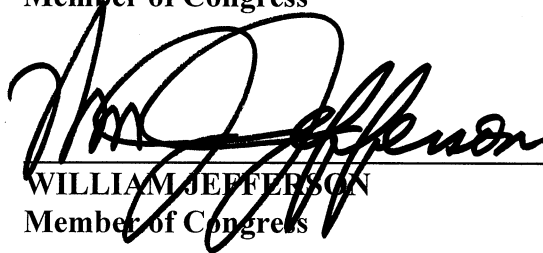
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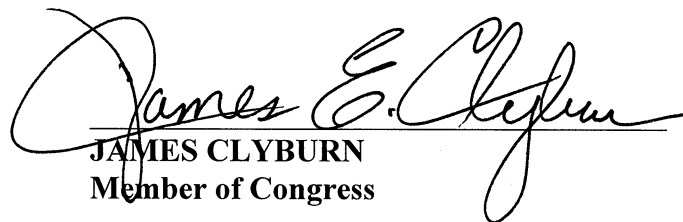
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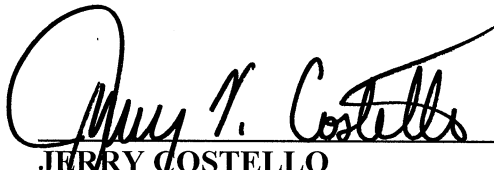
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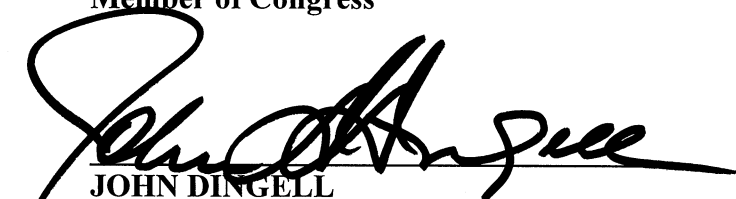
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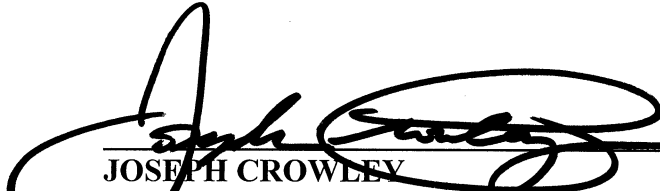
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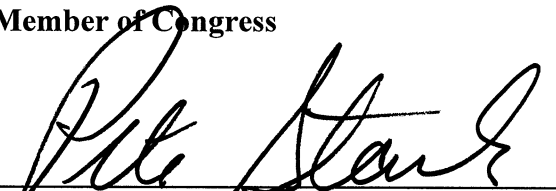
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